

Historic Preservation Design Review

January 28, 2010

HP-10-01, 31 N. Main St. – City Centre Terrace (City)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant:	City of Sumter
Status of the Applicant:	Julie Coker on behalf of City of Sumter
Request:	Design Review for proposed open lawn area with wall & fencing for property located at 21, 25, 27 & 31 N. Main St.
Location:	31 N. Main St. Open plaza between Angel's Restaurant and City Centre meeting Room and the parking area behind these two buildings
Present Use/Zoning:	Plaza and parking area / CBD
Tax Map Reference:	228-12-05-006, 007, 008 & 009
Adjacent Property Land Use and Zoning:	North – N. Main St Businesses & E. Hampton Ave Businesses/Central Business District (CBD) South – N. Main St Businesses & City Parking /Central Business District (CBD) East – Harvin St / General Commercial (GC) West – Angel's Restaurant/City Centre & Opera House /Central Business District (CBD)

II. BACKGROUND

31 N. Main St. is located in the eastern central portion of the Central Business District. The 4 parcels comprising a total of 1.42+/- acres are the site of an existing open area and plaza that connects to City parking lots that are located behind the Opera House.

The site is within the Downtown Sumter National Register District. It is also governed by the Sumter Downtown Design Review District. Streetscape elements, such as fencing, landscaping, and exterior light fixtures, must be reviewed and approved by the Committee. The rendering on the following page shows the proposed design and location of features.

Views of present location



View from end of alleyway toward plaza area



From directly behind alleyway. Opera House is on left.



From parking area off of E. Hampton St. looking West



...and looking South where fencing will be installed.

The area presently functions as a parking area. Design review approval is required prior to installation of the proposed new walkways, granite pavers, landscaping, and new metal and brick fencing.

Design of proposed new plaza area.

View from City parking lot behind Opera House.



View from parking area off of E. Hampton St. (directly behind 10 E. Hampton)



View from within new Plaza area looking toward existing parking lots



The *Design Review Guidelines Manual* states:

#3) LANDSCAPING SHOULD COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN DETRACT FROM BUILDINGS

Recommended

a. Trees of limited height and dimensions should be considered for the downtown area. Historic commercial areas such as downtown Sumter often had numerous shade trees to shelter pedestrians. With the coming of the automobile many of these trees were removed to make way for parking. The introduction of new trees into the downtown area is appropriate as long as the trees selected are of limited height and dimension. When mature, trees should not overly mask buildings and make signs and details difficult to observe. Trees should be spaced at least 30 feet from each other and have planting beds of at least nine square feet.

b. Low plants and shrubs at sidewalks are appropriate. The introduction of low hedges or planters with flowers or other decorative plants is appropriate. These may be desired as part of an overall streetscape program by the city or added on an individual basis by property owners.

As shown in the drawings, plantings and trees in this proposed setting are designed to enhance the pedestrian experience, and are of low height and are in harmony with the intent of this section.

#4) SIDEWALK AND STREET IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD RESPECT DOWNTOWN CHARACTER

Recommended

a. Streetscape improvements should be in keeping with the traditional character of downtown. Appropriate improvements include the introduction of brick sidewalks or textured concrete which imitates the appearance of brick. The use of brick or textured concrete can be of particular assistance in defining pedestrian crosswalks across streets. Simple street furniture such as wood benches would also be appropriate. The addition of elements such as continuous metal or concrete canopies, oversized kiosks or gazebos, and ornate wrought iron street furniture should not occur.

b. Streetscape improvements should be selected for their simplicity and durability. Many streetscape improvements completed across the country in the 1960s and 1970s are now in varying degrees of deterioration. In many of these cases materials or construction methods were selected which were incompatible with exposure to the elements or could not withstand the constant use by vehicles and pedestrians. Before any major expenditure for street furniture, sidewalk materials, or curbing, the longevity and lifespan of the proposed improvements should be carefully studied. Once selected, street furniture should be sited away from vehicular areas and be bolted or anchored in place to discourage vandalism.

The elements selected for this project are similar or identical to those already found in the downtown area in other pocket parks and along Main Street. Their configuration is in harmony with the pedestrian character of Sumter's historic downtown.

The proposed materials, including brick masonry and granite pavers coupled with wrought iron fencing are compatible with the requirements of this section.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this request. This design will enhance and extend the existing plaza area that lies between the Opera House and Angel's Restaurant into a public park and outdoor assembly area, and as such it meets the intent of the Historic design Guidelines. The proposed design and materials are compatible with those already in use throughout the downtown. The proposed location is public property and serves a public purpose.

Outdoor gathering places are a part of a functional and healthy downtown, and can function much as did traditional parks, bandstands, and public squares in historic context. Installation of these landscaping elements and the new Plaza area will result in a safe and usable public space that will encourage and support many public outdoor activities which will result in associated foot traffic and patronage for downtown businesses.

IV. DRAFT MOTION

I move that the Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee approve HP-10-01, in accordance with the materials, photographs, and construction details submitted and referenced in the Staff Report.

V. HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN REVIEW – JANUARY 28, 2010

The Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee at its meeting on Thursday, January 28, 2010, voted to approve this request, in accordance with the materials, photographs, and construction details submitted and referenced in the Staff Report.